



LACK OF AWARENESS OF HASS- HUMANITIES, ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCE AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MUMBAI INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper summarizes the idea that there is a lack of awareness of HASS - Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences among high school students in Mumbai, India. The paper uses the research results of a survey conducted among high school students in Mumbai (India) to further support the notion. It discusses the various previously proven reasons for the lack of awareness and gathers data from the participants ranking the role of the factors. The most common aspect of the lack of awareness is the assumption that the humanities are a subject for weak students, whereas science and math are for smart ones. However, it was found that science does not correlate to smartness, and the humanities are not just for the 'lost ones'. There are five other features of the lack of awareness that are presented in detail. The research results of the paper can be generalized to all high school students in Mumbai but not to other Indian regions.

KEYWORDS: Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Awareness, Mumbai

INTRODUCTION

India has come a long way in education ever since its colonial exploitation. India has built herself from almost nothing and has come to a level where one of the most selective education institutions, like the IITs, with an acceptance rate of just 0.5%, are providing top-notch education. But to focus on the fields, one will always notice every other Indian student saying that they want to pursue a career in engineering, medicine, or something in the science field. Often, there is an underrepresentation of the humanities, arts, and other social sciences. This is why, with the help of citing previous research and conducting surveys among high school students in Mumbai (India), this study focuses on the main reasons for this lack of awareness and other factors that wrongly facilitate underestimations of subjects.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A survey was distributed to high school students studying at schools and colleges in Mumbai, India. The sample size was 568, comprising 325 girls and 243 boys.

Level of study

The majority of the participants (around 50%) were sophomore-year students, with 25% from senior year, 20% from junior year, and only 5% still in freshman year. The level of study helped us gain insight into the general knowledge of the student filling out the form. 'Level of study' was selected over the measure of 'age' because students may not correlate with the class they are in.

Background

Most of the students who filled out the forms were from middle-class or upper-middle-class families. At least one of the parents of the participants had graduated college. The family had a minimum of one employed worker. These factors will help us determine the financial support that a student had and if the student had a pro-educational upbringing.

Education Board

153 students were from the ICSE Board, 201 from the CBSE Board, 117 from the State Board, and 97 from other academic boards. The education board data facilitates assumptions about

the exposure given to the child since each board has its own standard set of rules.

The variety in the demographics of the sample size ensures the avoidance of any kind of bias in the responses. The samples were also selected at random to enable the generalization of the research to all high school students in Mumbai (India).

Survey Questions

Besides the demographic questions, here is the data that was asked in the forms:

1. Do you believe that there is a lack of awareness of HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Science) subjects among high school students in Mumbai, India?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. I don't know
2. Rank the given reasons for the lack of awareness of HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Science) subjects among high school students in Mumbai, India
 - a. Humanities is a subject for weak students because smart students study science and math
 - b. Schools don't prioritize or encourage social studies in their curriculum
 - c. The societal stigma
 - d. Lack of approval from parents to pursue a career in the field of humanities
 - e. Absence of role models in the fields of Humanities
 - f. Minimal attention by the press and media
 - g. Other reasons or factors
3. Which of the following fields do you want to pursue your career in
 - a. Science
 - b. Commerce
 - c. Humanities

Every participant was asked what their opinions were on the title of the paper to get a hint of the situation of the humanities

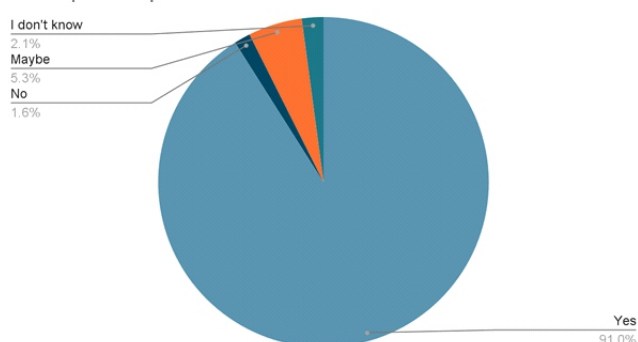
subjects in their environment and daily lives. In the next question, the reasons were chosen for the ranking after reviewing numerous factors that led to the lack of awareness of HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Science) subjects among high school students in Mumbai (India), and finalizing the ones that must have had the most impact on the decision making of Indian high school students.

RESULTS

Outcome 1

We had 568 participants answer the first question to find out whether they believe that there is a lack of awareness of HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Science) subjects among high school students in Mumbai, India. 517 (91%) participants replied that there is a lack of awareness, only 9 (1.6%) participants responded that there is no lack of awareness, and 30 (5.3%) participants voted that maybe there is some lack of awareness, whereas 12 (2.1%) participants were not sure of their answer and hence selected 'I don't know' as their option.

Participant responses



Outcome 2

After going through the rankings given by the students to the reasons for the lack of awareness of HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Science) subjects among high school students in Mumbai, India, there was a clear majority in the rankings, and the creation of an average answer was possible. Around 90% of the participants ranked 'Humanities is a subject for weak students because smart students study science and math' as the main reason for the lack of awareness. 94% of the participants voted that lack of approval from parents to pursue a career in the field of humanities is the second most common reason for the lack of awareness. The societal stigma was ranked third, and schools not prioritizing or encouraging social studies in their curriculum were ranked fourth. Both ranks received 92% and 89% of the votes, respectively. Minimal attention by the press and media was ranked fifth with 84% of the votes. The sixth most common reason was the absence of role models in the field of humanities, which got a majority with 83% of the participants' votes. The last rank was other reasons or factors, with 98% of the participants selecting it. The remaining votes were scattered amongst the other reasons randomly, without a show of pattern. Along with the percentage of votes that each reason received for its rank, the table below summarizes the responses and provides us with what looks like the ranks given by the participants on average.

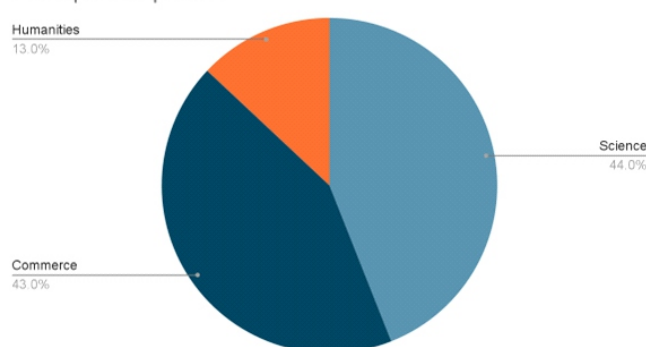
Rank	Reason	% of votes
1	Humanities is a subject for weak students because smart students study science and math	90
2	Lack of approval from parents to pursue a career in the field of humanities	94
3	The societal stigma	92
4	Schools don't prioritize or encourage social studies in their curriculum	89
5	Minimal attention by the press and media	84

6	Absence of role models in the fields of Humanities	83
7	Other reasons or factors	98

Outcome 3

Lastly, the participants were asked what subject they wanted to pursue their career in, and we found out that around 44% of the participants, i.e., 250 participants, want to pursue a career in science, 43% of the participants, i.e., 244 participants, want to pursue a career in commerce, and only 13%, i.e., 74 participants, want to pursue a career in humanities.

Participant responses



DISCUSSION

When the participants were asked if they believed there was a lack of awareness of humanities, arts, and social sciences among high school students in Mumbai (India), the majority of the students voted 'yes'. This shows us that the majority of the participants have witnessed in their surroundings and daily lives that the humanities as a subject are not given enough representation. To find out the reasons why such humanities subjects face such underrepresentation, a list of a few previously proven reasons for such a lack of awareness was accumulated.

Most of the students believed that the number one cause of such a lack of awareness was the assumed underlying fact that the humanities are for weak students because smart students study science and math. In many colleges, the admission cutoff percentage for science and math degrees is somewhere in the higher 90s, while for humanities subjects, it is often on the lower side of the 80s. Though there are certain exceptions for humanities-specific colleges that do have higher admission cutoff percentages, the majority of the colleges that are mostly science-focused often tend to disregard their humanities department. This difference in assessing the skills of a person and correlating smartness to science is what many believe is wrong with the system. Rank 2 and 3, i.e., lack of approval from parents and societal stigma, go hand in hand. Parents affect the immediate decision-making of the student, but it is the societal stigma that influences the mindset of the parents, leading to their lack of approval. The next three ranks, i.e., ignorance of the school, minimal attention by the press and media, and lack of role models are issues of demand and supply. If the parents do not encourage their children to study the humanities, there is a lack of supply, leading to an increase in demand for such subjects. If there is more awareness of such subjects, supply is bound to increase, leading to the fulfilment of the existing demand and even an increase. Other reasons also play a role, but the ones mentioned above are the key factors in the lack of awareness of the humanities, arts, and social sciences in Mumbai.

To further support this data, the participants were asked which field they wanted to pursue a career in, and as expected, only

13% of the participants (i.e., 74 students) voted for the humanities, with science and commerce being 44% (250 students) and 43% (244 students), respectively. This solidifies the opinion of the research paper that the humanities are a subject that is often neglected and surrounded by stigma that leads students to gravitate towards science and commerce. The societal norm is to encourage and praise a student who has decided to follow a path of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and to try and convince a humanities student to change his or her decision to follow the same path as a STEM major. Often, students give in to the pressure and end up choosing science or commerce over the humanities.

CONCLUSION

This entire paper summarizes the idea that there is a lack of awareness of HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Science) among high school students in Mumbai, India. The ranking of the reasons that play an important role in the lack of awareness shows us how the public mind functions. There is a clear lack of awareness for underrepresented subjects like those in the humanities, and significant actions need to be taken to decrease the stigma around the subject. Smartness is not equal to science, and the humanities are not for the 'lost ones' but for the students who actually have the capacity to take the future of society into their own hands.

A note to the readers: this paper has a sample size of 568 high school students in Mumbai, India. Thus, its findings cannot be generalized to the rest of the high school students in India because the diversity of the country does not facilitate similar upbringings and opportunities for the students. Every reason can have different research results depending on the environment, the background, and the kind of exposure that the educational system gives those students belonging to different regions. This research paper can only be generalized to high school students in Mumbai, India.

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